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ABSTRACT

The REEP (Arlington Education and Employment Program) 2-year special project, which set out to research, develop, field-test, and establish recommendations for alternative assessment methods for the language and literacy development of adult learners of English as a Second Language (ESL), is described and evaluated. Goals and needs of 117 adult students were determined, and plans for assessing their progress were developed. Benchmarks were created by identifying skills, behaviors, and attitudes indicating progress in cognitive, linguistics, and non-linguistic domains. Assessment processes and tools were field-tested and refined during the project's first year, then were adapted to multiple settings (workplace, drop-in center) in the second year. The project also determined the feasibility of aggregating data from alternative assessments for reporting purposes, developed a process and guidelines for and alternative assessment system in a variety of settings, and served as a demonstration site for teachers. It was found that the alternative assessment process itself was helpful for teacher development, and while alternative assessment is time-consuming, it enables teachers to substantiate promotion and retention decisions. Recommendations include further exploration of ways to streamline data collection, analysis, and reporting, and adoption of ESL proficiency standards for the Commonwealth of Virginia. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education) (MSE)

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ED 462 019

ARLINGTON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REEP ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT PROJECT
353 SPECIAL PROJECT

FINAL REPORT
July 1, 1994-June 30, 1995

FL 801154

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ABSTRACT
U.S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION
DIVISION OF ADULT EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

353 SPECIAL PROJECT FINAL REPORT

1. Title of Project: **REEP ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT PROJECT**
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   (Organization) Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP)
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3. Major objectives, and extent to which objectives were met:

Please note: This project has been a two-year project. This final report encompasses objectives met over a two-year period.

a. **Delineate goals and needs of individual learners and select measures to assess their progress toward these goals as well as the impact the program is having on their lives (affective and metacognitive).**

Goals and needs of 117 students were determined through a process appropriate to the English proficiency level of each class or, in the context of the Adult Learning Center (a drop-in lab), to individuals taking part in the project. In the intensive and workplace ESL classes, instructional plans were developed based on the needs assessment through negotiation of the class syllabus. Individual needs were accommodated through specific class activities (group/pair work), tutor assistance, and/or use of the multi-media learning lab available at REEP.

b. **Create benchmarks for success along the various dimensions of language and literacy learning: cognitive, linguistic, and non-linguistic.**

Entry level descriptions provided benchmarks in the linguistic domain, describing skill gains through our program as students were promoted from level to level. This project assisted teachers and the curriculum staff in refining these descriptions. An in-depth look at writing led to the identification of writing proficiency levels into which our instructional levels feed and the development of holistic and analytic writing scales to assess writing samples across our program levels.

The project was also able to identify a list of behaviors and attitudes that indicated progress within the cognitive and non-linguistic domains. Evidence of these benchmarks play an important role in determining whether or not the learner is ready for the next instructional level.

c. **Field test a variety of assessment instruments and processes.**

Processes and tools for initial needs assessment and goal determination, on-going progress, and promotion/retention were developed, tried, and refined throughout this first year of the project. During the second year, tools and processes were adapted to other settings, including workplace and drop-in learning lab.

d. **Determine the feasibility of aggregating data from alternative assessments for reporting purposes.**

The collection of progress data is time-consuming and the amount that can be collected is massive. Technology offers the possibility of providing assistance both in the collection and analysis of data through the use of pen-based computers.

An in-depth look at the development of writing skills enabled us to determine that there are general proficiency levels that would describe what a learner could do both to internal stakeholders (learner, teachers, administration) and to external stakeholders (community, funders). These are the "standards or outcomes" that could be reported. Movement through instructional levels that feed into these proficiency levels are indicators of progress along with scored writing samples. A brief look at other skills areas indicated such proficiency levels could also be determined for those skills. Thus, establishing outcome standards would streamline the reporting process and leave the identification of the indicators (standard or alternative assessment) of those standards up to the learner/teacher/program.

e. **Develop a process and guidelines for putting into operation a system for alternative assessment in a variety of ESL settings.**

During the first year, a process was developed for the implementation of alternative assessment in an intensive ESL program setting:determining needs/goals, identifying tools and processes for monitoring progress towards the goals, and reflecting on achievements and setting new goals. This process also worked in workplace, drop-in lab and intensive contexts. However, these contexts required shorter-term goals and a tighter match between goals and monitoring procedure.

A teacher training module was developed to guide other programs through alternative assessment implementation.

f. **Serve as a demonstration site.**

The REEP program was selected as a site visit for participants at the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Convention during the first year. Seventeen visitors participated. Over 100 other visitors participated in monthly Visitor Days at REEP since the project began. The majority were teachers and volunteers from various ESL programs in Virginia. Information was disseminated on the Alternative Assessment Project and participants had an opportunity to visit the classes where the process was being implemented.

4. Project findings:

a. The implementation process itself was of great value as a staff development tool no matter what the teaching context. Teachers gained confidence in their own ability to assess learners and began to integrate assessment throughout the instructional process--identifying learner goals, tracking progress, reflecting on achievements and setting new goals. Even if the teachers were specifically observing only a few students from the class for the purpose of this project, they found that their observation and assessment skills spilled over to enrich the entire class.

b. Alternative assessment is a time-consuming process. There are many "layers" to be addressed: funders and administrators, program and classroom, and the learners themselves. Indicators of learner success to each may be different and need to be accommodated. Alternative assessment instruments and processes take more time to implement than giving a standardized test or exercise and more time to interpret as results are not usually easily quantifiable. Yet they can be used to indicate the outcomes learners have achieved.

c. Alternative assessment enabled teachers to substantiate decisions for promotion and retention.

d. The project team meetings and small study groups were a vital source for creating commitment and mutual support as teachers implemented alternative assessment in their classrooms or worked to develop assessment tools.

5. Project recommendations:

a. Ways to streamline the collection, analysis, and reporting of data need further exploration. Technology has the potential to assist. Pen-based computers offer the possibility of recording incidences of progress as they occur in the classroom, cutting down the time (and memory) needed for the teacher to note progress gains and aggregate data. There use should be further explored.

b. ESL proficiency standards should be adopted for the Commonwealth of Virginia so that programs could report learner outcomes in a consistent manner yet still have the flexibility of determining what each learner's level is, whether through standardized or alternative assessments.

6. Potential influence of project on State Adult Education program:

a. The project supports DAE's Performance Indicators in seeking ways to document the progress learners are making toward their education goals and in providing staff development. It can serve as a model for the development of standards that can be used to report learner progress uniformally throughout the Commonwealth.

b. The project yielded a process which can be used by other ESL programs in the Commonwealth to implement alternative assessment.

Section I. OBJECTIVES

The REEP Alternative Assessment Project has been a two-year initiative to research, field-test, and establish recommendations for the use of alternative assessment procedures to evaluate language and literacy development of adult ESL learners. For this project, alternative assessment is defined as "any method of finding out what a student knows or can do, that is intended to show growth and inform instruction and is not a standardized or traditional test" (Valdez-Pierce and O'Malley, 1992, "Performance and Portfolio Assessment for Language Minority Students," Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education). During the first year, various alternative assessment tools and processes were developed, field-tested, and refined for seven levels of the Intensive ESL component of our program. Participating classes and their teachers were phased in over a 9-month period. During the second year, the alternative assessment tools and processes were adapted and implemented in two additional settings: Workplace classes and the Adult Learning Center (ALC), a drop-in learning lab. Our program evaluation framework was revised to integrate alternative assessment and led to the validation of instructional level descriptions and the creation of holistic and analytic writing scales to assess writing across all program levels and contexts.

Objectives for the two-year project were as follows:

A. Delineate goals and needs of individual learners and select measures to assess their progress toward these goals as well as the impact the program is having on their lives (affective and metacognitive)

B. Create benchmarks for success along the various dimensions of language and literacy learning: cognitive, linguistic, and non-linguistic

C. Field test a variety of assessment instruments and processes

D. Determine the feasibility of aggregating data from alternative assessments for reporting purposes

E. Develop a process and guidelines for putting into operation a system for alternative assessment in a variety of ESL settings

F. Serve as a demonstration site

Section II. HOW WE MET THE OBJECTIVES

A team consisting of the director and coordinator of the project, a consultant with experience in alternative assessment, coordinators from other program components and two teachers was formed to implement alternative assessment in the first instructional cycle. A decision-making framework was established which called for determining program/class/learner needs, defining success in language and literacy

development, identifying means to monitor progress toward and achievement of goals, and documenting the implementation process. The primary vehicle for making implementation decisions throughout the first year became the weekly project team meetings (coordinator and teachers). During the second year, various study groups were formed to implement activities to meet the project's objectives.

Objective A : Delineate goals and needs of individual learners and select measures to assess their progress toward these goals as well as the impact the program is having on their lives (affective and metacognitive).

Needs assessment is fully integrated with instructional planning during each teaching cycle, no matter what the instructional context: intensive ESL, workplace, ALC. It comprises a part of the first curricular unit at each level. Teachers select a process and/or tools appropriate to the proficiency level of students in their class. Instructional plans are then negotiated based on the needs assessments. Individual needs not accommodated through the class syllabus can be met through tutor assistance and/or use of the multi-medial learning lab available at REEP.

Progress was noted in a variety of ways, depending on the content and level of the class. Linguistic and content knowledge were recorded at all levels and contexts for each student on an individual progress report that reflects content competencies and skill level assessment. New instruments introduced at all levels to record progress in the three domains of linguistic, cognitive, and non-linguistic, included teacher logs, teacher observation grids, and portfolios with a content summary sheet. Other class/level specific instruments and processes were also explored such as audio/video taping, surveys, and special projects. (See Appendix A for an annotated listing and examples.)

As the project progressed, the need to identify expected outcomes at each level became apparent. These outcomes would enable learners to have a profile of their accomplishments and capabilities. Criteria for the development and scoring of assessment tasks to validate these outcomes could then be established. Two study groups were formed, one to look at writing skills and the other to look at oral skills. The Writing Group collected and analyzed actual writing samples across all program levels and contexts to identify what students could actually do at each instructional level. The writings fell into three proficiency levels. A holistic scale (with three proficiency levels) and an analytic scale (with seven defined levels of development across 8 categories of aspects of writing) were developed (Appendix B). These levels and scales were then checked against our 8 instructional level descriptions and their curricular objectives yielding a high correlation. The Oral Proficiency Group taped interviews with students at 2 levels (250 and 550) to determine what they were able to talk about, with what level of proficiency and confidence, and under what circumstances. The task of collecting and analyzing speech samples was extremely laborious and time consuming so that no definitive conclusions were reached. However, we suspect that there are three to four levels of speaking proficiency into which our instructional levels fall. This merits additional study and could yield data

from which to build a systematic assessment of oral skills.

Impact on students' lives has been the most difficult to determine. Surveys conducted periodically while students were still in class provided some insight. Such surveys indicated a growing awareness of environmental print and use of English outside of class. Follow up once students had left the program was not feasible due to time and personnel constraints.

Evaluation plan:

Strategies	Outcomes	Outcomes to date
1.1 Select needs assessment methods and instruments to determine goals and needs of each student	1.1 Goals for 115 students will be determined and recorded	1.1 Goals for 117 students have been determined and recorded
1.2 Develop a plan of instruction to meet those goals	1.2 Instructional plans for 115 students will be developed and recorded	1.2 Instructional plans for 117 students have been developed and recorded
1.3 Select/create measures of progress	1.3 Progress will be assessed and recorded	1.3 Progress has been assessed using various tools and processes
1.4 Select/create impact measures	1.4 Impact will be assessed and recorded	1.4 Impact noted through classroom reporting

Objective B (2): Create benchmarks for success along the various dimensions of language and literacy learning: cognitive, linguistic, and non-linguistic.

Benchmarks in language development were established through a concurrent curriculum revision process. The implementation of alternative assessment assisted in the refinement of entry level descriptions for each of our instructional levels. These entry level descriptions serve as benchmarks indicating progress in language proficiency. The research conducted by the REEP's Alternative Assessment Writing Group validated the level descriptions and curricular objectives by correlating them to the three general proficiency levels defined through actual student writing samples. Writing scales have been created to assess benchmark attainment. Initial exploration of oral skill proficiency is leading toward similar conclusions.

Cognitive skills are indicated in some level descriptions. Other cognitive and non-linguistic benchmarks were noted by teachers and a list was compiled. As an outgrowth of this project, a group of three teachers and the project coordinator formed a research study group through the Virginia Adult Educators Research Network to further explore the non-linguistic benchmarks. Preliminary data indicate that these benchmarks tend to overlay the linguistic. Their development appears to depend on a variety of factors such as personality, previous educational experience, stage of culture shock, living conditions, work experience both in native country and the U.S.

Although a chronology of development is difficult to observe, the emergence of these benchmarks aids the teachers in making promotion and retention decisions. (See Appendix YYY for definitions and indicators of evidence of the non-linguistic benchmarks explored by the research group.)

Evaluation plan:

Strategies	Outcomes	Outcomes to date
2.1 From students' goals and needs, choose areas critical for success to be evaluated	2.1 Critical areas will be identified for each goal	2.1 Critical areas have been observed in each level where alternative assessment has been implemented
2.2 Set incremental steps that will indicate movement toward success	2.2 Incremental benchmarks will be identified	2.2 Benchmarks for all skill areas have been identified. Cognitive and non-linguistic indicators appear to overlay the linguistic
2.3 Select/create a method/instrument to evaluate that movement	2.3 An array of instruments to measure progress, depending on goals, will be catalogued	2.3 A variety of instruments and methods have been identified and/or created

Objective C (3): Field test a variety of assessment instruments and processes.

Several instruments and processes were developed and/or field-tested during this first year. Adaptations were made during the second year to accommodate new contexts: the Adult Learning Center and workplace classes. (Appendix A) The needs assessment processes lend themselves well to adoption in the new contexts, although the actual instrument may need to be refined. For example, A needs assessment in a workplace setting would reflect the roles that the employees engage in on the job as opposed to the lifeskill role orientation of the general intensive ESL context.

The original intent had been to expand implementation to a fourth context: non-intensive ESL classes. Meanwhile, Fairfax County Adult ESL, with whom we had intended to work, had already begun implementing alternative assessment in their non-intensive classes. Rather than duplicate an implementation process, we provided training to their teachers through VAILL-ESL, REEP cluster training, participation in REEP in-services, and participation by the project coordinator in their alternative assessment team meetings.

Common to implementation of alternative assessment in all three additional contexts was the challenge to carefully define short-term goals that could be accomplished in the limited amount of time and to choose assessment tools that were capable of showing growth and development towards meeting those goals.

Evaluation plan:

Strategies	Outcomes	Outcomes to date
3.1 Implement use of alternative assessment instruments	3.1 Use of alternative assessment in first cycle	3.1 Alternative assessment was implemented in seven levels
3.2 Meet with teachers and students to analyze data	3.2 Recommendations for adoption/adaptation of procedures and instruments will be made	3.2 Recommendations were made by teachers for subsequent cycles
3.3 Adapt/adopt procedures and instruments	3.3 Procedures and instruments will be amended	3.3 Instruments were refined and others were developed
3.4 Implement procedures and instruments in following cycles	3.4 Use of alternative assessments will be phased in over the next two program cycles	3.4 Implementation was phased in to include seven instructional levels by the end of the first year of the project
3.5 Continue to analyze data and make recommendations	3.5 Adjustments will be made to procedures and instruments as implementation is extended to three more contexts	3.5 ALC and workplace teachers adapted processes and tools and implemented alternative assessment in these two contexts. Technical assistance was provided for implementation in non-intensive classes

Objective D (4): Determine the feasibility of aggregating data from alternative assessments for reporting purposes.

The collection of alternative assessment progress data is time-consuming and the amount of data that can be collected is massive. A portfolio summary sheet was designed with the idea of its usefulness for reporting and recording keeping purposes. This led to the redesign of the attendance card (Appendix C) and pointed to the need for the development of a learner profile that would provide stakeholders with information about the learners goals, progress toward meeting them, outcomes (what a student can do), affective behavior and strategies (how they go about it), and contexts (range of support necessary. The establishment of writing proficiency levels and the creation of writing assessment scales that show how learners progress as they move through our instructional levels hold promise for the creation of such a profile. However, such proficiency levels and assessment tasks and scales need to be developed for other skill areas before a complete profile can be developed. Establishing such outcome standards would streamline the reporting process and leave the identification of the indicators of those standards up to the learner/teacher/program.

Technology also holds promise for assisting with the collection and analysis of data. Our search for ways to facilitate the process, led to the discovery of the potential of pen-based computers. Two applications, one on IBM-based equipment (Tycho) and the other on Apple-based "Newtons" (Learner Profile), are capable of assisting teachers in recording data as it is observed in the classroom and transferring it to a data bank that assists in analyzing it. This would enable teachers to keep their assessemnt focus on the learner, and, at the same time, aggregate data program-wide

for analysis that can assist in program planning for continued effectiveness and accountability. It also holds the potential for validating indicators and outcomes. These uses of technology merit further study.

Evaluation plan:

Strategies	Outcomes	Outcomes to date
Consider reporting formats in view of field test data analysis and advisory board recommendations	Recommendations for reporting alternative assessment data	Recommendations include the development of learner profile that uses technology to assist data collection and analysis

Objective E (5): Develop a process and guidelines for putting into operation a system for alternative assessment in a variety of ESL settings.

Our own implementation process and reflections on its successes and challenges were recorded in order to assist in the development of a guide useful to other programs wishing to implement alternative assessment. A training module was developed, field-tested at VAILL-ESL '94, modified, and delivered during a REEP cluster training series to a group of teachers and volunteers from the northern Virginia area. The participants represented a variety of instructional contexts including one-on-one tutorials, volunteer-taught and professional-taught non-intensive programs, and intensive programs. Evaluations and feedback indicated that this module serves as a guide for others who wish to improve their understanding of alternative assessment and implement it in their own classrooms.

Evaluation plan:

Strategies	Outcomes	Outcomes to date
5.1 Review the implementation process in each of the four settings	A guide describing the process and how to implement it	5.1 Implementation in three instructional contexts has been documented.
5.2 Make recommendations for use of alternative assessments		5.2 Teachers have made recommendations and field tested instruments/processes
5.3 Develop a guide to assist other programs in replicating the alternative assessment process		5.3 A training module has been developed to guide programs through the implementation process

Objective F (6): Serve as a demonstration site.

Visitors included over 100 teachers and volunteers from Virginia and other states. Among the visitors were Madeleine Kunin, Deputy Secretary of Education; August Kappner, Assistant Secretary for Adult and Vocational Education; Andy Hartman, Director for the National Institute for Literacy; Alice Johnson, staff aide to Senator Paul Simon, and seventeen participants in the International TESOL convention. Information was disseminated on the Alternative Assessment Project and visits were made to classes involved in the implementation process.

Several trainings and dissemination presentations were also made by project

staff. These include two International TESOL conventions (1994 and 1995), VAILL-Petersburg and VAILL-ESL '94, VAACE '95, program in-services, and REEP Cluster Training. As a result of the presentations, inquiries about the project have been received from VanCouver, British Columbia, Australia, and other programs in Virginia. Articles have appeared in the WATESOL News and VAACE newsletter disseminating project findings.

Evaluation plan:

Strategies	Outcomes	Outcomes to date
6.1 Develop a seminar/training module	6.1 Hold at least one seminar for 15 teachers	6.1 Implementation process was documented in order to prepare training materials.
6.2 Disseminate findings in a variety of professional settings	6.2 Present at VAACE, VAILL, and such conferences as well as send guide, reports, and training module to the Virginia Resource Center and ERIC	6.2 Project staff presented findings and conducted training at various state and national conferences, two articles have been published in local newsletters, and a training module has been developed.
6.3 Provide opportunities for teachers to observe classes where alternative assessment is in place	6.3 At least 5 teachers from around Virginia will have visited REEP classes	6.3 Over 100 visitors, the majority being teachers and volunteers from Virginia, have received information on the project and observed REEP classes

Section III. Summary

The implementation of alternative assessment has been a "process" through which the project team has considered the definition of literacy and language development, what indicates success, how to monitor on-going progress towards goals and document achievements. This process has been translated into a training module that will guide other programs and future REEP staff as they implement alternative assessment in their own classrooms. The implementation process itself was a valuable staff development vehicle no matter what the teaching context. It encouraged teachers and learners to take a critical look at what counts as progress, how to capture it, and how to report it. Teachers gained confidence and skill in assessing learners and began to integrate assessment throughout the instructional process--identifying learner goals, tracking progress, reflecting on achievements and setting new goals. Even if the teachers were specifically observing only a few students from the class for the purpose of this project, they found that their observation and assessment skills spilled over to enrich the entire class.

This project has also enabled us to define more concretely the work that lies ahead. A framework for the creation of a learner profile has been identified: proficiency level descriptions reporting outcomes and instructional level descriptions reporting achievement of incremental benchmarks in language and literacy development. The work accomplished with writing skills provides a model for future work defining proficiency and outcomes in other skills and creating tasks and scales to assess them.

Although many of our initial questions have been answered, new questions have been opened: What is the relationship between proficiency levels and instructional levels in each skill area? How can data collection be efficiently managed? How can technology assist not only the collection but also the analysis of alternative assessment data? What should a learner profile look like? Who will benefit from knowing the information? The process, just like the one we implemented in the classroom, continues: setting inquiry goals, monitoring our progress toward them, reflecting on achievments, and setting new goals.

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ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND PROCESSES

REEP Alternative Assessment Project
353 Special Project
July 1, 1994-June 30, 1995

Compiled by Carol Van Duzer
Instruments have been created or adopted/adapted

Alternative Assessment

Definition and Underlying Principles

Alternative assessment can be defined as "any method of finding out what a student knows or can do, that is intended to show growth and inform instruction and is not a standardized test" (Valdez-Pierce and O'Malley, "Performance and Portfolio Assessment for Language Minority Students," National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1992). What, how, and why a program chooses to assess are shaped by the program's view of what consitutes literacy and language development. Increasingly programs are considering both linguistic and non-linguistic factors (Wrigley, "Learner Assessments in Adult ESL Literacy, National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education, 1992). What do the learners need or want to know? What are they actually learning? What indicates learner progress to the teacher? To the learners themselves? What needs to be documented for the learner, the teacher, the program administrators, the funders, and other interested parties? These questions, which should be answered as a program considers alternative assessment, imply certain principles underlying the concept of alternative assessment:

--It must be program-based and learner-centered
--It should help learners achieve their goals
--It must build on learner strengths, not deficits
--It must be a process done with the learner and not to the learner
--It must be part of the learning experience
--It should not be a single procedure, but a variety of procedures
--It should provide feedback that will lead to better instruction
(From McGrail, "Learner-Centered Approaches to Assessment: Developing a Framework," In-depth session at VAILL-ESL'93)

These principles encompass three phases of alternative assessment: initial assessment including placement and needs assessment, on-going progress, and achievements and reflections. It is a continuing process in which the monitoring of on-going progress may alter the goals or path to achieving them and reflecting on accomplishments may lead to new goals that set the stage for the next instructional step.

Initial Assessment

Initial assessment assists programs in placing learners within the existing framework of the program or in setting up a course of study for a particular learner or groups of learners. Such assessment may consist of finding out what learners can do with language and literacy (speaking and reading and writing samples), what their needs and goals are (goal setting activities), where and how they use language and literacy (surveys and inventories), what strategies they use to make sense out of what they hear and read (surveys and interviews). The initial assessment process may occur prior to placement in program, in a particular class itself, or partially prior and partially in the

class. For example, a placement procedure may determine at what level a particular learner should study and then classroom procedure may assess learner need and goals to establish a course of study.

On-going Progress

On-going assessment documents progress the learners are making toward the goals established and program of study set up as a result of the initial assessment. It should inform learners as to their development and teachers as to learners' needs so that instruction remains relevant and effective. It should be integrated in such a way that it becomes part of the learning process. Weekly summaries (what have learners read, where have learners used language/literacy, what is the learner learning), development of a learner portfolio (samples of writing, tasks accomplished), processing activities (were they easy/difficult, what made them so, what strategies helped) are just a few of the types of on-going assessment activities in which to engage the learners.

Achievements and Reflections

During the achievement and reflection phase of alternative assessment, learners and teachers look back over the instructional period to assess whether goals have been met and progress has been made according to the program's standards or definition of progress in language and literacy development. Decisions may be made about promotion or retention, goals may be refined and redefined, documentation of progress may be recorded, the learning experience may be evaluated. As the learners relect on their own learning, the teachers should also reflect on their teaching: what worked, what didn't, why, what to do differently/the same next time, how will this effect their teaching practices. The program as a whole looks back to see how the program has done in its mission to move learners forward in language and literacy development.

These three phases of alternative assessment do not always proceed in linear fashion, but are cyclical. The line between on-going assessment and achievements/reflections may blur as goals are met or redefined and as instructional plans develop. Alternative assessment is not static but moves in response to the evolving goals and needs of the learner, teacher, and program.

Conducting Initial Needs Assessment in the ESL Classroom

Needs assessment is most successful when students understand its purpose and are comfortable with each other. It does not happen cold on the first day of class. Students need an opportunity to get to know each other and the teacher. Students begin to open up as they acknowledge shared concerns and build a community in the classroom. Several days may be spent discussing where they use English, what problems they have encountered and why they feel they need to improve their language skills before attempting any formal documentation of needs.

The following tools and processes represent the efforts of REEP teachers at determining needs and interests of their classes. However, the processes and tools can be adapted for use in tutorial and individualized instruction contexts. Students with lower English proficiency usually need more prompting assistance in articulating needs than those with higher proficiency. Opportunity should always be provided for students to express needs that may not be represented on prepared activity sheets nor accounted for in the curriculum.

Processing the information together enables all the students, along with the teacher, to see the various needs represented in the class-- needs that may be similar or vary greatly. The information is used to establish the instructional plan for the cycle, and set up ways to meet individual student needs apart from the class (with a volunteer, as part of a focus group, or supplemented through study in our Learning Center). The community building continues as students agree to study English through the contexts representing the greatest needs in the class.

Tools and Processes

PICTORIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Choose pictures that depict the curricular units of the instructional level and copy them in random order onto paper to construct a "questionnaire."

2. Review the pictures with the class to ensure students understand what each picture represents.

3. Have students select 5 (or another number that can be covered in the instructional time period) they are interested in studying.

   Variations: Skill tally--select pictures that represent the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), talk about what each is and where/why students use it, have students rank order their own priorities. Whole-body voting(Vote with your feet)--put the pictures up around the room (rather than on a "questionnaire") and have students stand next to the picture that represents their

greatest need. Repeat several times so students can rank their top 4-5 priorities. Use of a picture dictionary--can substitute for a picture questionnaire, identify pages in the dictionary that correspond to possible contexts of study, discuss what each is about, then take a ballot vote with students selecting the 5 most important to them. Cut-out illustrations--students cut out pictures from magazines of things they would like to be able to do with English.

REACHING GROUP CONSENSUS

Grid tally:

1. Have students work in groups of 3-5, tallying their responses on to a grid (or using a questionnaire sheet).

2. Within each group, have the students reach consensus on the top (5) needs of their group.

3. Have each group report their priorities to the entire class, recording the results on the board or tear sheets.

4. Have the entire class come to consensus on topics and skills on which to concentrate that cycle.

Picture cards: (priority cards)

1. Have students work in groups of 3-5.

2. Distribute to each group a pack of cards with needs assessment pictures (can be cut up from the questionnaire).

3. Have each group come to consensus on the rank order of topics, placing the cards in order. (It may be helpful to have them agree on 4-6 topics before rank ordering them.)

POINT OUT THAT THESE ARE THE TOPICS THAT WILL PROVIDE THE CONTEXT FOR THE ENGLISH THEY WILL STUDY IN THE CLASS.

BRAINSTORMING (learner-generated lists)

1. Students list one or more of the following:
   --reasons they want to study English
   --when they need to speak English
   --where they need to use English
   --with whom they speak English
   --where/when/with whom they have problems using English
   --other

2. This list may be used to construct a questionnaire or as basis for individual students to choose the 4-6 topics they would like to work on during the cycle.

3. Then have students work in groups to come to a consensus.

Variation: Ballot voting--students can write on a piece of paper their top three choices. Tally the results on the board or tear sheet to determine areas of greatest need/interest.

WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Based on brainstorming or curricular units develop a list of possible topics. (May use progress report.)

2. Present the list individually or on the overhead.

3. Have students select individually their areas of interest/need.

4. Then have students work in groups to come to consensus.

FOUR CORNERS (form of whole-body voting) for determing language skill needs

1. Write each of the 4 language skills on a sheet of paper and post one in each of the 4 corners of the room.

2. Ask students to move to the corner that represents one or more of the following:
   --what they need/use the most
   --what they need/use the least
   --their greatest strength
   --their greatest weakness
   --other

3. Note areas of greatest concern so the class can come to consensus on skills to concentrate on for the cycle.

USAGE/PROBLEM CHARTS

1. Prepare a grid so students can keep track of where, when, and with whom they use English and/or wanted to use it and had a communication problem.

2. Have students keep track of this information for a designated period of time (a week or two).

3. Have students bring the information back to the class to tally and analyze.

4. Come to consensus where need to concentrate study for the cycle.

COMPOSITIONS OR JOURNALS

1. Have students write a composition or in their journals about their needs and interests in studying English.

2. Students can share these with the teacher and/or each other, extracting needs to form a basis from which to reach a class consensus or use in conjunction with other needs assessment instruments to determine individual needs.

WRITING SAMPLES

1. Writing samples should be taken within the first days of class to ascertain writing development needs.

2. Topics concerned with why students are studying English and/or what their education and work goals might be could be suggested. These writings would then be shared with the teacher and with each other and used as a basis for developing a list of possible contexts/skill areas on which to build an instructional plan for the class.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

1. Have each student fill out a form requesting information on past and present work and education experience as well as long and short term goals.

2. Use this form as a basis to discuss areas of study the class might want to consider

3. Come to consensus on topics.

Initial Needs Assessment

Level 100

--picture questionnaire
--grid tally

Level 150

--picture questionnaire
--individual, then group consensus
--grid, class tally
--brainstorm reasons they want to study English

Levels 100/200

--brainstorm when need to speak
--whole body voting using pictures

Level 200

--plan of class (?)
--progress report checklist
--grid/group work
--small group work, rank order 5 topics chosen from curricular list

Level 250

--picture questionnaire, individually then group consensus
--asking overtime (2 weeks) why studying English, where need more English
--rank order topics

Level 300

--face drawing: I have problems with Englilsh, I use English, goal, best year
--class tally, rank order in groups
--practice/problem survey

Level 350

--progress report on overhead, group prioritize
--4 corners for language skills
--small group work tear sheets: where they use and need English
--curricular topic and skill survey of priorities (individually)

Level 450

--4 corners for language skills
--Venn diagram "our team" for curriculum, "I need to study . . . most," "I need English for . . ." (most useful for topic NA on individual comps)
--grid, "This weekend I used English . . ." (name, where, with whom, for what, any problems), served to stimulate thinking
--summary of curricular content on overhead, groups select 5
--journal entries to pen pals, intro video

--small groups list where use English and what read and write

Level 550

--grid, "Why are you studying English?"
--questionnaire (problem areas, skill priority, curricular units)
--self-evaluation form
--reading/writing practices
--describing self as learner
--brainstorm "should study" and curricular topics: order individually, then come to group consensus

NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS CHART

This tools chart provides suggested activities for needs assessment. The activities are divided into different types of tools, e.g. those which require written; those which can be done orally. Samples of many of these tools can be found in the appendices.

In the first column of the tools chart, the tools are listed. The logistics column provides suggested steps in implementing the activity. The purpose column provides information on what point in the course of instruction the tool would be most effective. The analysis column provides suggestions for calculating the results, in most cases with the learner's input. The level column suggests the levels that the tool would be most appropriate for. To facilitate your search for appropriate tools, the tools are listed by level below.

LEVEL	SUGGESTED TOOLS
100	Information grids, learner-generated lists, mind-mapping, cut-out illustrations, pictorial questionnaires, topic selection tools, pictorial timelines, learner generated questionnaire.
150	Information grids, learner-generated lists, mind-mapping, cut-out illustrations, written questionnaires, topic selection tools, written timelines, reading/writing samples, learner generated questionnaire.
200 & 250	See tools suggested for 150 (except cut-out illustrations and pictorial timelines).
300 - 550	Information grids, learner-generated lists, mind-mapping, written questionnaires, topic selection tools, timelines, class bulletin boards, diary charts, reading/writing samples, dialogue journals.
550	Individualized Education Plan.
*	Sample tool included following the tools chart.

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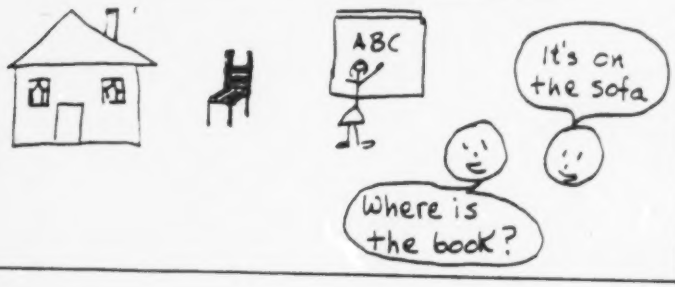
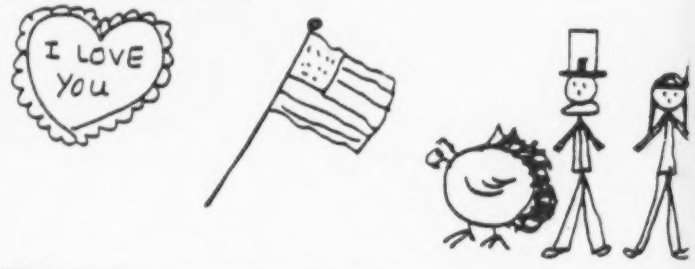
Name _____ Circle (5) you need to study.

Classroom and housing



Holidays



Time and weather

What time it?

It's 2:00

It's windy and raining.

Money

dollar bill
@ - 25¢

Do you have change for a dollar?

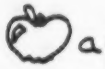
Yes, I do

Community

I need 3 29¢ stamps

The library is next to the bank

Consumerism



apple

hat

grapes

jacket

I need a pound of onions

They are 59¢ a pound

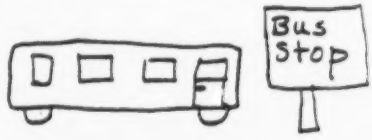
Health

I have a stomachache.

911

Transportation

I walk to school



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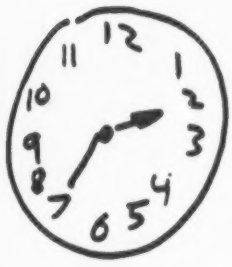
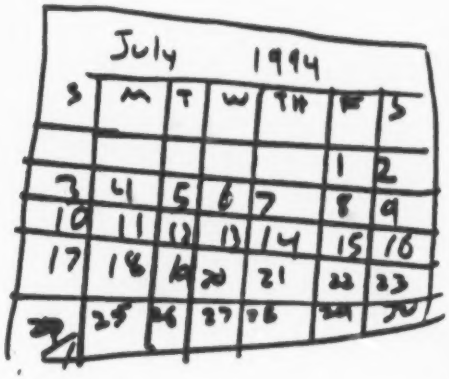
TIME
WEATHER
Schedule





Appointment
on ____ At ____

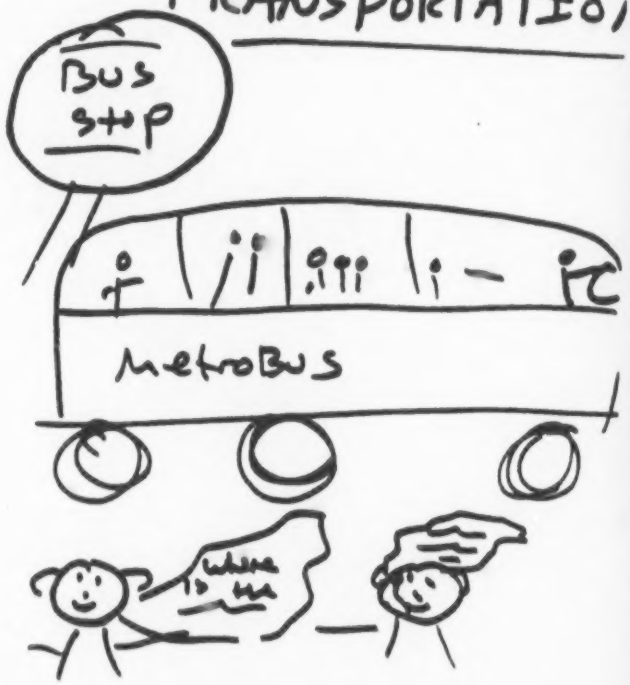
JOBS

Vocabulary
applications
instructions

MONEY AND BANKING

How much?

TRANSPORTATION



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CONSUMERISM

CLOTHES

what color?

FOOD

How much?

where can I find...?

GETTING STARTED

Introductions
Greetings
questions

Speaking
Writing
Listening
Reading
Spelling
Pronunciation
grammar

MORE ??

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...MUNITY

library
parks

Clinics
Classes

HOUSING

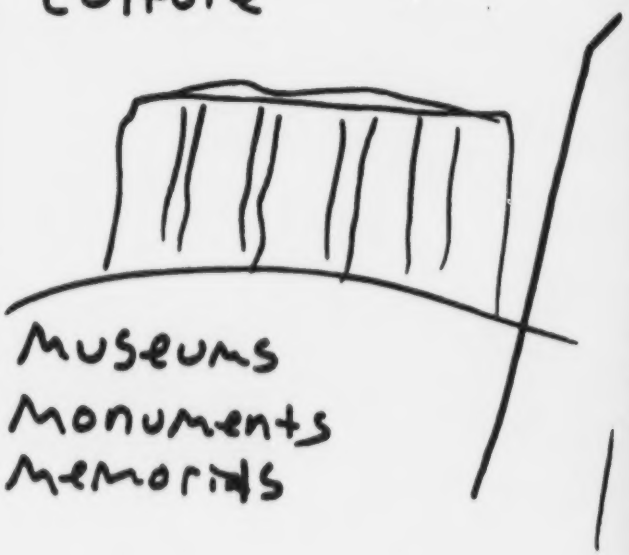
Vocabulary
"How much is the rent?"

HEALTH

call the doctor

Vocabulary
illness

History/Governme
Culture



Museums
Monuments
Memorials

I Want To Learn

150 10/94

ne_____

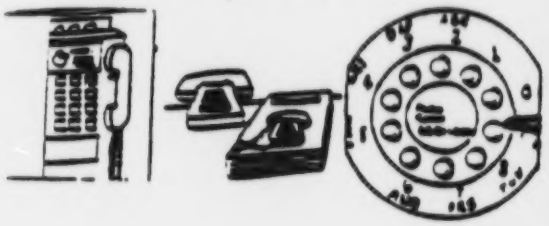
Consumerism ___

2. Health ___

). Housing ___

4. Money and Banking ___

5. Telephone ___



6. Time and Weather ___

7. Transportation ___

8. Working ___

9. Other _____

200 10/94

Name		Why do you want to study English?	What do you need to practice most?	Do you practice English after class?

Group Name_____ Date_____

What does your group say?

Why do you want to study English?_____ How many?

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

What do you need to practice?

Speaking _____

Listening _____

Reading _____

Writing _____

Grammar _____

Do you practice English after class?

Yes No

_____ _____

NAME _____ DATE 550 PM 10/94

1. Please explain why you need more English. Be specific with examples of situations which are difficult for you now.

2. What problem area do you want to improve before you leave this class?

3. When people speak English to you, do you understand:

___ 100% ___ 80% ___ 65% ___ 50% ___ less than 50%

4. When you speak English, do people understand you:

___ 100% ___ 80% ___ 65% ___ 50% ___ less than 50%

5. When you watch TV, how much do you understand?

___ everything ___ most ___ some ___ a little ___ very little

6. Please **ORDER** the skills that you need from 1 to 6. **Number 1 is the most important and 6 is the least important to you at this time. Please use each number only once.**

____ READING

____ WRITING

____ LISTENING

____ SPEAKING

____ VOCABULARY

____ PRONUNCIATION

7. Have you ever studied English in the past? ___ yes ___ no How long? _____

Where? _____ When? _____

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\550\comboNA

To: Susan
From: Deborah
Re: Needs Assessment 200/250 Barcroft
August, 1994

My needs assessment begin the first day of class when I put this chart on the board and asked students to fill it in:

Today I used English	speaking	listening	reading	writing

We started each class for a week talking about where/with whom, etc. they were using English. (That's when we discovered that most English writing, including my own, was signing our names on checks and credit card bill receipts.!)

The beginning of the third week I had students line up in the order of how long they'd been in the US and then count off into small groups (of 4). (I like to have a mixture of time in the US in these groups though sometimes I think it might be better to have "old timers" together and "newcomers" together.)

We brainstormed the different places where they use English. Then I asked them to think about where they had trouble using English. I explained to them that there were so many things I could teach them in the next 9 weeks, but that I wanted to be sure I was teaching what they needed/wanted to know. That this activity would help me determine what it was they were coming to school for so that I would not be wasting their precious time in the classroom. They liked that.

Next, I handed out the attached questionnaire and had students fill them out individually. After finishing the individual questionnaires, I had them work together as a group to come up with 5 and then 3 topics. It worked better than I had thought it would for this level. It took around 1 hour.

NAME _____

A. Ask yourself the following questions:

Where do I use English?
When do I use English?
Where and when do I have problems because I need more English?

There are many things you can study during the next 10 weeks. Look at the list below, think about your answers to the questions above, and check (✓) the **5** topics that you think are the most important.

☐ Government (Study about the system of government in the U.S.)

☐ Community Services (Study about the library and community agencies.)

☐ Banking (Study about filling out forms for the bank, writing checks, etc.)

☐ Consumerism (Study the English you need for shopping.)

☐ Health (Study the English you need for going to the doctor.)

☐ Housing (Study the English you need for finding an apartment and talking to your landlord.)

☐ Telephone (Study the English you need for using the telephone and study about using the phone book.)

☐ Transportation (Study the English you need for asking for and giving directions. Study about schedules. Study about traffic signs.)

☐ Working in the United States (Study the English you need for finding a job. Study the English you need at work.)

B. Look at the 5 topics you checked. Which 3 are the most important? Put them in order: 1 = most important.

1.

2.

3.

_____ _____
Date

Number of years completed in school _____

Are you working? _____ Yes _____ No

What is your job? _____

Put a check ( ) after the following -

1. **When** do you **speak** English?

_____ at work

_____ at the grocery store

_____ at a department store

_____ when I speak on/answer the telephone

_____ when I speak w/ my doctor

_____ speak to the repairman

_____ speak English at school (Barcroft) w/teacher & classmates

_____ Others (give other examples where you have to speak English).

Do you speak English.....

_____ speak with my child's teacher

_____ speak with my landlord

_____ speak w/American friends friend fr. other countries

_____ talk to my neighbor (what nationality?)

_____ speak with my boss

2. **When** do you **read** in English?

_____ English newspapers

_____ street signs

_____ letter from my child's teacher

_____ memos at work

_____ **Help Wanted** ads

_____ appliance instruction manual

_____ Signs at work (bulletin boards, schedule, etc.)

_____ Read telephone messages

_____ letters from other people (in English)

_____ read doctor's prescriptions

_____ read labels of clothes

_____ read recipes

_____ read water bills

_____ Others (give examples when you have to read in English)

Do you read .....

_____ English magazines

_____ my child's homework

_____ job application forms

_____ **Now Hiring** signs

_____ rental contract

_____ stories in books

_____ sale prices in stores

_____ read medicine labels

_____ read telephone bills

_____ read credit card bills

3. **When** do you write in English? You write in English when.....

_____ write to my child's teacher
_____ fill out job application forms
_____ fill out credit card application form
_____ fill out medical history form
_____ fill out rental/housing contract
_____ write letter of complaint to the store, etc.
_____ write letter to friend (what nationality?)
_____ fill out crossword puzzles
_____ take an exam (what kind of exam?)
_____ write telephone messages

Give other examples when you need to write in English

_____
_____
_____

4. PROBLEMS - **Speaking** English ....
Think about a problem when you needed to speak in English, but could not because you didn't speak English well enough (last week, last month, 3 months ago, 6 months ago, a year ago, etc.....)

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. PROBLEMS - **Reading** in English
Think about a problem when you needed to read in English, but you had a difficult time reading.

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. PROBLEMS - **Writing** in English
Think about a problem when you needed to write in English, but you had a difficult time writing because you did not know enough English.

_____
_____
_____
_____

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I have problems in English when (I)

1.
2
3

I use English when (I)

1.
2
3

best year

the name of the person who helped me m

the name o the perso I love mo

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THIS WEEKEND I USED ENGLISH...

NAME	WHERE	WITH WHOM	FOR WHAT	ANY PROBLEM

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350 topics

Getting Started: greetings, conversations, introductions, maps, describing hometown, country, school rules

Number these in oder of what is important to you. 1 is MOST IMORTANT. 11 is the least important to you.

___ Civics/Government: learn about US local, state and federal government, citizen rights and responsibilities.

___ Consumerism: Savings/checking accounts, credit cards and credit applications, make consumercomplaints, and finding consumer information

___ Health: complete medical history forms, reads medicine labels and directions, describe symptoms, make a doctor's appointment

___ Holidays: learn about historical event and people, describe how it is celebrated, compare with holidays in your own country

___ Legal services: describe a crime, complete crime/accident report, request information for legal problem

___ Media: Newspapers, understanding ads and commercials, weather forecasts and TV schedules

___ Telephone: Take and leave messages, record answering machine messages, listen and report information from recordings, call utility companies for service.

___ Transportation: Read maps, give directions, complete driver's license application, report theft, loss or accident

___ US History: Describe what happened in a specific time, compare with historical events in own country.

___ Finding a Job: want ads, applications, interview, getting job information.

___ On the Job: follow instructions, ask for clarification, schedule change, safety on the job, apologizing, suggesting,

Put in order 1 - 4 of what you need to work on the most.

_____ Listening _____ Reading _____ Writing _____ Speaking

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Please prioritize these topics. Write #1 next to the topic you most interested in studying. Continue numbering until you have put all the topics in rank order.

_____ **Civics/Government of USA**: citizenship, government duties, etc.

_____ **Consumerism**: buying/selling/returning purchases (house, car, etc.)

_____ **Finding Work**: job interviews, letters, where & how to look.

_____ **Health**: identify diseases, make appointments, fill out forms.

_____ **History**: historical figures, US history-early to modern.

_____ **Holidays**: study US holidays, celebrations and customs.

_____ **Legal Services**: local court system, discrimination, violations.

_____ **Media**: newspapers, television, ads, editorials, etc. -- reading.

_____ **Telephone**: making and taking calls, asking for service, etc.

_____ **Transportation**: Getting driver's license, traffic tickets, rules, etc.

_____ **Working in the USA**: job evaluations, problem solving, etc.

Please prioritize these topics. Write #1 next to the topic you most interested in studying. Continue numbering until you have put all the topics in rank order.

_____ **Civics/Government of USA**: citizenship, government duties, etc.

_____ **Consumerism**: buying/selling/returning purchases (house, car, etc.)

_____ **Finding Work**: job interviews, letters, where & how to look.

_____ **Health**: identify diseases, make appointments, fill out forms.

_____ **History**: historical figures, US history-early to modern.

_____ **Holidays**: study US holidays, celebrations and customs.

_____ **Legal Services**: local court system, discrimination, violations.

_____ **Media**: newspapers, television, ads, editorials, etc. -- reading.

_____ **Telephone**: making and taking calls, asking for service, etc.

_____ **Transportation**: Getting driver's license, traffic tickets, rules, etc.

_____ **Working in the USA**: job evaluations, problem solving, etc.

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UNIT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Civics/Government											
Consumerism											
Finding Work											
Health											
History											
Holidays											
Legal Services											
Media											
Telephone											
Transportation											
Working in the USA											

GROUP # _____

AS A GROUP, CHOOSE WHAT YOU THINK ARE THE **5** MOST IMPORTANT TOPICS FOR YOU TO LEARN ABOUT. CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

HOUSING (living in an apartment, etc.)
CONSUMERISM (buying things)
HEALTH
WORK 1 (finding a job)
WORK 2 (on the job)
LEGAL SERVICES
MEDIA (newspapers, TV)
TELEPHONE/COMMUNICATION
TRANSPORTATION
GOVERNMENT
HISTORY

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

As a group decide what you need to learn in order to have success in that topic. *Think about what you need to do in* **ENGLISH** when dealing with the telephone or transportation or housing - whatever topics you have chosen. ***Think about problems you have had and what you need to learn in order not to have those problems again.***

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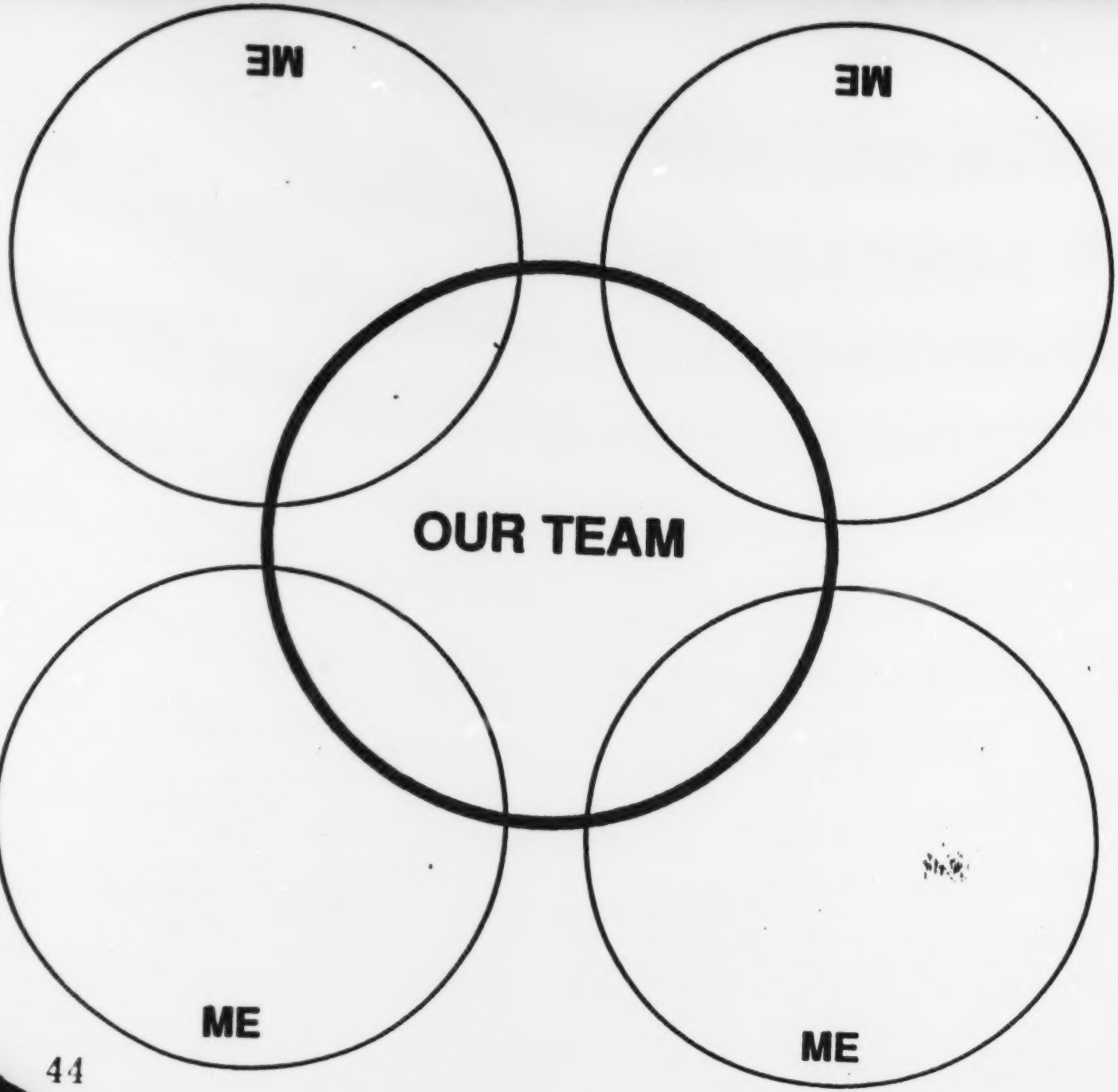
ME
ME
OUR TEAM
ME
ME

4/94

NAME _____ DATE _____

1. Please explain why you need more English. Be specific with examples of situations which are difficult for you now.

2. What problem area do you want to improve before you leave this class?

3. When people speak English to you, do you understand:

___ 100% ___ 80% ___ 65% ___ 50% ___ less than 50%

4. When you speak English, do people understand you:

___ 100% ___ 80% ___ 65% ___ 50% ___ less than 50%

5. When you watch TV, how much do you understand?

___ everything ___ most ___ some ___ a little ___ very little

6. Please **ORDER** the skills that you need from 1 to 6. **Number 1** is the **most important** and 6 is the **least important** to you at this time. **Please use each number only once.**

____ READING

____ WRITING

____ LISTENING

____ SPEAKING

____ VOCABULARY

____ PRONUNCIATION

7. Have you ever studied English in the past? ___ yes ___ no How long? _____

Where? _____ When? _____

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Read the following topics. Order the topics that you would like to study. 1 is the **MOST IMPORTANT** and 9 is the **LEAST IMPORTANT.**

_____ TEST TAKING SKILLS: How do you prepare, study for and take standardized tests?

_____ SPEAKING: GIVING ORAL PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATING ON THE TELEPHONE: How do you research, organize and give oral presentations? How do you improve listening comprehension and speaking fluency in telephone conversations?

_____ NOTE TAKING: How do you take effective notes from lectures, oral presentations and written materials?

_____ WRITING: How do you brainstorm, organize, develop topic sentences, write, revise and edit your writing?

_____ READING: How do you improve reading speed and comprehension in both test and non-test situations?

_____ LEGAL: How do you get and interpret information about laws, including immigration, crime and traffic violations?

_____ FINDING WORK IN THE USA: How do you fill out complex job applications, write a resume, prepare and follow-up on a job interview?

_____ WORKING IN THE USA: How do you express complaints, make requests, ask for a raise or write a letter of resignation?

_____ MEDIA: How do you read and interpret newspaper articles, print ads and TV commercials?

_____ OTHER: _____

_____

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ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL TRACK
ARLINGTON ADULT LEARNING SYSTEM (AALS)
INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)
STUDENT SECTION

NAME: _____ DATE: _____
Last Middle First

CURRENT TEACHER: _____

I. OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

Occupation in native country: _____

Occupation in the US: _____ Do you work full- or part-time? _____

Job Training: (When/where/what kind _____)

II. EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

Years of education in native country: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

High School Diploma: Yes No
University Diploma: Yes No (Major: _____)

Education in the United States:

____ English (When/Where _____)

____ High School (When/Where _____)

____ Other (When/Where _____)

III. COURSE GOALS

To be completed by student:

Why are you studying English? (Please be specific) Do you want to continue studying English after you finish this class? Where?	*To be completed by counselor:* Date/Comments	Date/Comments

Name	Did you speak English?	Where?

ANSWER FOR **YOU**

	Who did you speak to?	What did you say?	Was it easy? Was it difficult?
At home?			Easy A little difficult Difficult
At work?			Easy A little difficult Difficult
At the store			Easy A little difficult Difficult

ASK YOUR **PARTNER**

	Who did you speak to?	What did you say?	Was it easy? Was it difficult?
At home?			Easy A little difficult Difficult
At work?			Easy A little difficult Difficult
At the store?			Easy A little difficult Difficult

Writing Survey

1. What languages do you write in?

2. What do you write in your own language? in English?

	own	English		own	English
checks/money orders	___	___	notes to self	___	___
diary	___	___	order forms	___	___
forms/applications	___	___	letters	___	___
stories/poems	___	___	notes at work	___	
work reports	___	___	notes to school	___	___
homework	___	___			

Other _____

_____

3. How much time do you usually write each week?

not at all ____ a few minutes ____ almost one hour ____

2-3 hours ____ 4 or more hours ____

4. What do you like to write the most?

5. Do you write at work?

If yes, what do you write?

6. Circle the one that is true for you:

Writing is A. very interesting B. OK C. very boring

Writing is A. easy B. a little difficult C. very difficult

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250

Reading Log

In order to improve your reading skills, you will need to keep a record of what you read in your free time. Please fill out the chart below as often as possible.

What did you read?	Time spent reading	How did you feel about it?

Assessment of

READING AND WRITING PRACTICES

Name _____ Date _____

Provide as much information as possible in answering the following questions:

	Read?	Write?
What do you		
When do you		
Where do you		
With whom do you		

Why do you want to learn (or to improve) your reading and writing skills?

_____

_____

_____

Source: El Paso Community College, Literacy Education Action, Exploration Activities

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450/550

Student self-evaluation

Rate your job in English class. Read the following statements and decide what score to give yourself. Be honest!

Scores: 1 excellent 2 good 3 OK 4 needs improvement

1) I usually take notes in class.

2) I always speak English in class (not my native language).

3) I speak English outside of class (with co-workers, etc.)

4) I review my notes at home on a regular basis.

5) I use an ESL or English dictionary to look up some vocabulary.

6) I attend class regularly and come on time!

7) I try to use the English I'm learning in my everyday life.

8) I ask the teacher clarification questions when I don't understand.

Now it's your turn to evaluate the teacher!!
Please give me scores (same scale) on the following topics. Be honest, don't feel you have to be nice to me!

Writing practices. _____ Dialogue journals. _____

Speaking practices. _____ Conversation opportunities. _____

Reading practices. _____ Listening practices. _____

Please add your suggestions on how I could make the class better next cycle:

Comparison and Contrast:
Strategies for Organizing Writing Material:

Gathering Information

1. Set up a chart for the points of comparison.
2. Collect data/information/statistics.
3. Double check accuracy of data.
4.
5.

Making a Paragraph

1. Organize the facts by subtopics.
2. Write topic sentences to connect the ideas together.
3. Use connectors and comparison words and phrases to compare facts.
4. After the facts have been presented, include a personal opinion regarding the facts or a conclusion based on the facts for each paragraph.
5.
6.

Checking a Paragraph

1. Revise: check for errors in:

____ Spelling	_____ Punctuation and Capitalization
____ Grammar	_____ Word Choice

2. Have someone read your paragraph.
3. Connect each paragraph to the next one, if possible.
4. Have someone else read your finished paper.
5. Continue to revise as needed.
6.

READING

Group Members: _____

_____

In your groups, **discuss the following questions**:

1. What kinds of things do you read in English at home or at work?

2. How do you read? Do you read for a short time or a long time? Do you stop in the middle to think about your reading? What environment do you like when you are reading?

   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.

3. What kinds of things do you like to read?

4. What kind of things do you expect to read when you go on to College or Vocational training? How do you think it might be different from now?

5. What kinds of problems do you experiece when you read? Why is each one a problem? Discuss any or all of the following:

Vocabulary
Using a dictionary quickly and efficiently
Sentence structure
Technical language
Unknown subjects
Remembering previous reading
Putting the overall meaning together
Understanding the writer's purpose
Understanding the main idea
Distinguishing between fact or fiction
Other: _____

_____

_____

5. Discuss some possible solutions for these problems:

PROBLEM **SOLUTION**

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Name _____ Date _____

1., What did you do to prepare for the test? Sleep? Food?...

2. How did you budget your time for the test? Did you spend too much or too little time on one section?

3. Did you have any problems with the instructions? Were they clear for you?

4. How do you think you did on the Listening Section? (___ right out of 20) **Why?**

5. How do you think you did on the Grammar Section? (___ right out of 30) **Why?**

6. How do you think you did on the Vocabulary Section? (____ right out of 30) **Why?**

7. How do you think you did on the Reading Section? (___ right out of 20) **Why?**

8. Do you think the preparation in class helped you with the test? **Why or why not?**

9. What would you do in the future to prepare yourself for a test similar to this? **Please be specific.**

Name of **PRESENTER**: _____ Date: _____

Name of Evaluator: _____

TOPIC: _____

_____

MAIN IDEAS:

Rate the Speaker on the following:	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
1. Spoke clearly			
2. Spoke at a moderate speed			
3. Gave a clear main idea			
4. Gave a good preview of the talk			
5. Gave ideas in a logical order			
6. Used supplementary material well			
7. Stayed on the initial topic			
8. Presented an interesting conclusion			
9. Answered questions adequately			

WRITING CHECKLIST

1. Are the paragraphs indented? _____
2. Does the paragraph have a main idea? _____
3. Is the spelling correct? _____
4. Are proper names capitalized? _____
5. Are the articles (a/an/the) correct? _____
6. Are the sentences complete?
   Do they have a Subject and a verb? _____
7. Are the commas in the right place? _____

WRITING CHECKLIST

1. Are the paragraphs indented? _____
2. Does the paragraph have a main idea? _____
3. Is the spelling correct? _____
4. Are proper names capitalized? _____
5. Are the articles (a/an/the) correct? _____
6. Are the sentences complete?
   Do they have a Subject and a verb? _____
7. Are the commas in the right place? _____

A. Name	B. Languages	C. What?	D. At Work?	E. Like/Don't

Name _____
Date _____

Where did you speak English this week? _____
_____

Who did you speak English to? _____
_____

What did you read in English this week?_____
_____

This week I needed to study _____
_____
_____

This week _____ was difficult in class.

This week _____ was easy in class.

You are doing great work in English!

Donna Moss TESOL 94 Alternative Assessmnet: A fork in the road

100

Group _____

Names _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1. How many?

Yes _____.

No _____.

2. Where? _____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

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Writing--Analytic Scale

	1-2	3-4	5-6
TOPIC	little comprehensible info doesn't address question or task, may list items addresses part of the task, little substance	addresses question or task but lacks detail/elaboration	effectively addresses the question or task, substantive
ORGANIZATION	weak, incoherent thought pattern difficult to follow, ideas not connected not logical, irrelevant info	limited in appropriate details some details for support or illustration, inadequate development	discernable structure, coherent, progresses and flows may attempt more than one paragraph multiparagraph with clear intro, developmt of ideas and concl, ideas are connected(seq/log), appropriate supporting details
VOCABULARY	limited word choice, repetitious frequent errors of function, choice and usage; meaning obscured	occasionally errors of function, choice and usage but meaning not obscured	varied and effective choice and usage although may have some errors
GRAMMAR	frequent errors, distracts from content	restricted to basic structural patterns (simple present, s-v, prep:in,to,after); use of adverbials and conjunctions	attempts variety of structural patterns some errors few or no errors
SENTENCE STRUCTURE	mostly fragment sentence structure repetitive,serious and frequent errors (especially in word order), interferes with meaning	use of simple compound structures, some errors that occasionally distract from meaning	attempts use of complex sentences, some errors, but meaning not obscured syntactic variety, well-formed sentences
SPELLING	errors distract meaning, invented spelling	errors that occ. distract from meaning	few or no errors
MECHANICS	handwriting difficult to read, lack of mechanics, meaning sometimes obscured	some punctuation and capitalization, though frequent errors	uses common conventions with occasional errors
VOICE	mechanical, flat, predictable	perfunctory shows some sense of purpose, some engagement	authoritative, persuasive, interesting, engaging emerging personal style strongly reflects the writer's intellectual involvement, personal style is evident

Note: "0":no info or little comprehensible (may have copied from board), no organization, limited vocabulary (may have copied), may have illegible handwriting

Writing--Quick form

	I	II	III
TOPIC	little comprehensible info, may address part of the task, little substance	addresses question or task but lacks detail/elaboration	effectively addresses the question or task, substantive
ORGANIZATION	weak, incoherent, thought pattern difficult to follow	limited in appropriate detail, inadequate development if any	discernable structure, coherent, progresses and flows
VOCABULARY	limited word choice, repetitious, frequent errors that obscure meaning	occasionally errors of function, choice and usage but meaning not obscured	varied and effective choice and usage although may have some errors
GRAMMAR	frequent errors, distracts from content	restricted to basic structural patterns; use of adverbials and conjunctions	attempts variety of structural patterns
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VOICE	mechanical, flat, predictable	perfunctory,may show some sense of purpose/engagement	authoritative, persuasive, interesting, engaging

Note: "0":no info or little comprehensible (may have copied from board), no organization, limited vocabulary (may have copied), may have illegible handwriting

I	II	III
--little comprehensible information, may address only part of the task, incoherent --limited vocabulary, repetitious --errors gramma:/spelling distract from meaning --lack of mechanics	--addresses question/task but lacks detail/elaboration, inadequate development --basic structural patterns, with use of conjunctions and adverbials --errors in grammar/spelling occasionally distract from meaning --some punctuation/capitalization --perfunctory, may show some sense of purpose/engagement	--effectively addresses the question/task --discernable structure, coherent, flows --varied and effective choice of words and structural patterns, few/no errors --used common mechanical conventions with occasional errors --authoritative, persuasive, interesting, engaging

APPENDIX C

Name:
Address:
Telephone #:

• • • EMERGENCY • • •

Name:
Telephone #:

Combo Test Date Score

Current Teacher:
Level:
Site:
Time:
Do Not Change #:
Start Date: _____
Type Enroll: _____ Log Number: _____

Dispo: C15 C16 C17 C18 C19
New Level:
Reregis:

Attendance Record

	M	T	W	TH	F
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					

Previous Cycles:

Start Date	Site	Type	Teacher	Level	Time	Hours	Dispo

REEP ESL PROGRESS REPORT: Language Skill Assessment

Student's Goal:

Please mark *(X)* in appropriate boxes.

Teacher's Comments:

BEGINNING	100	150	200	250	300	350	450	550	Exit
Reading									
Writing									
Speaking									
Listening									

Please write *(F)air, (S)atisfactory, (G)ood,* or *(E)xcellent.*

Teacher's Comments:

MID	PROGRESS
Reading	
Writing	
Speaking	
Listening	

Student's Signature/Date/Comments:

Please mark *(X)* in appropriate boxes.

Teacher's Comments:

FINAL	100	150	200	250	300	350	450	550	Exit
Reading									
Writing									
Speaking									
Listening									

Student's Signature/Date/Comments:

Teacher's Signature/Date: _____

B:\ATTEND.CAR

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Proficiency Levels--Writing

Overview and Purpose

A goal (objective B) of the Alternative Assessment Project was to create benchmarks for success along various dimensions of language and literacy development. Writing was one of these dimensions. Although writing entry-level descriptions and curriculum objectives were revised under the Transition Project, an assessment scale that could be used to evaluate writing samples across all components of REEP's ESL program was lacking. Validation of level descriptions for writing and creating an assessment scale were major activities in year 2 of the alternative assessment project.

Process

1. During the summer of 1994, Carol collected writing samples from both day and evening classes at all levels. She grouped and analyzed them for characteristics of writing development that described what a writer could do for each grouping. It appeared that we had three levels of writing among learners in our program.

2. To check this hypothesis and create an assessment scale, Donna and Pat joined Carol (January, 1995) to form the Alternative Assessment Writing Study Group. Additional samples were collected from the next cycle of classes and divided among the study group. The task was to group the samples, note identifying characteristics of writing development, and come to consensus about writing levels and their definitions. Carol's hypothesis was confirmed.

3. Various writing scales were examined. Two (one analytic and one holistic) were chosen to use as evaluation tools for yet another set of writing samples. We wanted to see if using rating scales would give us the same levels. Without any prior discussion of how to use the scales, we rated papers with a high degree of consistency.

4. From these scales and our list of writing characteristics gleaned from our analysis of writing samples, we created an analytic scale to field test.

5. The field-test produced a high rate of scoring consistency. It was refined and a holistic scale was constructed based on this analytic scale.

6. These scales were then compared to entry-level descriptions and curricular objectives for each level.

Outcomes

A. Three levels of general writing proficiency have been defined.

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These levels can serve as descriptors to various stakeholders of what learners can do in writing. Our instructional levels feed into these proficiency levels: I (100,150,200), II (250,300,350), and III (450,550). The proficiency levels can be further broken down into low-high across 8 characteristics of writing development: Topic, Organization, Vocabulary,Grammar, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Mechanics, and Voice. These are the characteristics that emerged as important indicators of writing development during our study. We then created an analytic assessment scale ranging from 0-6 for each of these characteristics.

B. Within a general proficiency level, curricular objectives and evaluation criteria fluctuate between low and high on the scale depending upon the entry level description and hence, how a learner actually writes at that level. Various combinations of writing development characteristics account for differences among instructional levels. Progress can be indicated by movement through instructional levels even though a learner may not jump to a higher proficiency level. This can be documented by applying the analytic scale to learner writing samples. As learners progress, an increasing number of writing characteristics move up to higher ratings on the scale.

C. It is interesting to note that when we had difficulty assessing what level to assign to a writing sample, it was usually, indeed, a fence sitter! For example, when I applied the analytic scale to a sample I wasn't sure about, I discovered that 4 of the characteristics belonged to level I and 4 to level II.

D. The general proficiency levels correlated with entry level descriptions, curricular objectives, and present placement test scores:

General Proficiency	I	II	III
REEP Entry level	100,150,200	250,300,350	450,550
Placement score	0-2(4)	4-6	8-10

Comparisons with the entry level descriptions called for minor adjustments of the description or curricular objectives and evaluation criteria. These were incorporated in the most recent printing (June, 1995).

Recommendations

1. Analysis of placement: The scales should be field-tested on

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writing samples obtained from the placement test. The holistic scale does not discriminate among instructional levels. Such a field test would yield data on adjusting the scale so instructional level determinations could be made if the program chooses to adapt this scale for placement testing assessment.

2. Systematic assessment of writing samples can now be put into place for reporting writing outcomes on a learner profile. The assessment scale is ready, but a list of topics needs to be identified for each level along with criteria for how to assignment is given to students--i.e. "Write about someone important to you." or "Write an essay with introduction, supporting details and conclusion . . ." Keep in mind that copying a model is practice and free writing is assessment.

3. The process of determining general proficiency levels should be applied to other skill areas. Initial work with oral proficiency samples indicates that a similar situation exists--instructional levels feed into general proficiency levels. The next steps would be to determine these levels/outcomes and develop assessment tasks to evaluate them.

(Submitted by Carol Van Duzer, June 30, 1995)

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